

Minutes
Spring AWISA Meeting
Friday, April 27th, 2007
South Seattle Community College

- Social time was held from 8:30 – 9 am.
- 66 members signed in.
- Leana de la Torre, current AWISA Chair, began the meeting at 9 am.
- Welcome by Dr. Cheryl Roberts, Vice President of Instruction, SSCC.
- Treasurer's Report given by Brad Huggins of The Art Institute of Seattle. AWISA account balance is higher than usual due to increased membership.

Sessions

Concurrent Sessions: 9:30-10:30

Session A: Developing and Implementing Region I Best Practices

Moderated by Leana de la Torre, University of Washington

Progress reports from the fall session: Ginger Villanueva reported that she and Mabelle Allman had discussed their homework (creating a questionnaire that would gather contact information based on specific categories, such as who to contact with SEVIS transfer questions, extra-curricular activity planning, etc.) It was decided that in some ways this would repeat work already gathering in the AWISA membership database. A better alternative might be to create additional columns in the existing database with pre-determined categories (activities planning, SEVIS, etc.). This could be posted in the AWISA site in a read-only format. The information could be gathered when membership forms are submitted. This project will continue to be worked on during the summer.

Attendees split into separate discussion groups: Admission, Transfers, Employment, and Responses to Violence on Campus.

Admissions

Discussion Topics:

1. (From Shoreline Community College) We've been encountering certain "patterns" from certain countries that is becoming quite problematic. One example is that despite all of the information on our admissions correspondence regarding coming a week prior to the beginning of classes to attend orientation, or if interested in homestay, to set it up PRIOR to arrival, students will sometimes arrive on campus at the very last minute, speaking no English, with no place to stay and sometimes no money. The staff then has to scramble to address the one student's extraordinary problems during the busiest times of the quarter when it is practically impossible to do so. This also includes having to set up extra ESL tests, etc and trying to find a translator.
2. Another pattern is where students from certain regions will use a bank statement and Affidavit of Support form from an "uncle". Very often, such students then end up defaulting on their tuition payments. The term uncle appears to be used quite loosely and we suspect it is just a family friend who may not actually intend to support the student but just has the necessary funds that the student needs to show to get an I-20.
3. Immediate requests to transfer to another school: is it okay to have institutional policies that differ, and may be more strict, than regulatory policies? Example: SEVP guidance indicates that after entering the U.S. on a particular school's I-20, as long as the student contacts that school, it is okay to transfer the SEVIS record to a second school. Is anybody requiring registration for at least one quarter? Raising enrollment confirmation fees/deposits?

4. How best to convey important information to initial students? What do schools do? (Admission brochures, emails, etc.?)

Discussion topic 1& 4

Several participants expressed that this was an ongoing issue in their offices and they were always trying to find ways to communicate and get information through to applicants and admitted students. Some have opted to do translations, while others feel that it is counter-productive (especially for schools that require a TOEFL, for example). One school mentioned that they have a scheduled communication calendar and that it is great to provide information when students are more able to "digest" the information since students get quite overwhelmed with the flood of information they receive in the first week after they arrive. Schools that require admitted students to complete forms prior to arrival sometimes feel that it is difficult to make students comply with deadlines.

Discussion topic 2:

Several institutions ask admitted students for an enrollment deposit before they will issue an I-20. Some schools ask for \$250 while one private high school asks for \$1000. This helps make sure that the student is serious about attending school and has sufficient funds available. When asked whether this deposit would be non-refundable, some said it was, while others said that they would reimburse it in certain circumstances (such as failure to get a visa). Some schools also ask admitted students to sign an enrollment contract. One participant expressed concerns around how asking for a deposit may add to administrative time in terms of having to send refunds, etc., as well as result in a delay of I-20 issuance.

Discussion topic 3

A number of participants said their school handled this kind of situation on a case by case basis. Those that ask for non-refundable enrollment deposits prior to I-20 issuance probably end up having fewer of these kinds of situations. Some schools are still requiring students to report in person before they will release the record in the first quarter, while others are closely following the directives given in the SEVP FAQs that addressed first quarter transfer-outs. We talked about the FAQs and the kinds of issues that are now coming up that are proving to be problematic, such as students who clearly never intended to come to your school to start out with but think it is easier to get a visa with your school's I-20 than another school (for e.g. a school in Seattle vs. a school in New York or D.C.). Sometimes, such students have been advised to do so by overseas agents. It is harder now to prevent such situations if one closely follows the FAQs.

Transfers

In follow-up to fall, where it was decided that a universal transfer form should be created and posted on the AWISA website to be used by any school interested, Christine Kofmehl shared her draft. The group made various suggestions about the most crucial information for a Transfer-in form, and Christine will make the changes. Once completed, the final version will be posted.

Other discussion topics included withdrawals and transfer eligibility. Kaplan allows a 15 day window for processing a transfer after a withdrawal. As far as the next program start date, the 5-month rule is followed.

One adviser brought up this scenario: two students complete a program on the same date. One student immediately requests a transfer, while the other waits until the end of the grace period. Consequently, they have different "first available start dates" at their new programs and are confused. Is this fair or in some way abusing the system?

Though it may be confusing to students, the wording of the regulations dictates this. Basically students must begin studies by the next possible start date after their transfer request.

The question of postponing a transfer release date to allow for continued on-campus employment was brought up. It looks like there may be some inconsistencies, as some schools allow it, while others do not allow students to work on campus after graduation.

At the fall meeting it was agreed that schools would not release records without acceptance letters verifying admission at the new school.

Employment

Discussion topics:

1. Seattle Central Community College received multiple RFEs and one denial for OPT applications based on certificate programs. They had used the "other" category on the I-20, which NSC did not seem to like. NSC guidance was that certificate/"other" programs were only eligible for OPT if they were post-degree programs; one RFE requested evidence of the degree from home. For now, Abe Schafermeyer (RegBud) has suggested using the "Associate's" level. Has anyone else experienced this?
2. CPT and change of level: if a student completes OPT in June and begins a new full-time program at a higher level in September, is that student immediately eligible for CPT? Can the time spent in the previous level count as the "academic year" since it is on one continuous SEVIS record?
3. With the H-1B cap filling up extraordinarily fast this year, we have been fielding questions about extending graduation into summer (after already applying for OPT and clearly planning to graduate in spring). What is the best way to approach this when the extension request is not for a compelling academic reason?

1. OPT RFE/ AA V.S. Certificate issues

The group discussed certificate programs and OPT eligibility at different institutions, particularly at Community Colleges. We agree that it will not be appropriate to use "AA" degree level when authorizing OPT based on a certificate program. The "Other" category is appropriate.

In this particular case study (SCCC), additional letters from an academic advisor or a counselor explaining the nature of the certificate might be helpful. No comment on an RFE requesting evidence of the degree from home.

2. CPT & Change of level

The period during program degree change after OPT ending is considered 'between transfer', not "grace period." Whether the new school will consider a transfer student immediately eligible for CPT is subjected to interpretation. We discussed full-time enrollment V.S. maintaining 'status' in between transfer.

Certain schools authorize CPT for graduate students who have academic requirements—provided that s/he has been maintaining status; including the time spent in the previous level.

3. OPT/H-1B & Program extension.

H-1B cap brought about inquiries from students who want to ensure there is no gap between their F-1 and H-1B status. Students ask for delayed graduation although they are able to graduate (no compelling academic reason). In many cases, they already applied for OPT.

We discussed changing OPT dates as well as canceling& reapplying issues.

Undergraduate students do not have the same privilege as graduate students. If spring graduates do not complete program requirements (failing classes, etc.) while OPT has already been approved, they're out of luck. If OPT is still pending and s/he is eligible for vacation, extension is possible.

Most of us feel comfortable authorizing program extension as long as it is recommended by the department/or an academic advisor.

Responses to Violence on Campus

1. Though International Students have their own added stressors, International Advisers don't perceive there to be a great threat of them perpetrating violent crimes due to different cultural upbringing, level of adaptation if they have come to the U.S., etc...

2. There is definitely a need for every school a campus plan for violent emergencies. One possibility includes a text messaging service - e2campus was recommended - where students can sign up and advisers can text them in case of violence ("stay away from the Smith Building") or even school cancellations due to snow.

a. Whatever plans are in place need to be practiced. It's easy to come up with a plan, but hard to remember it when an emergency actually happens. Practice will help you keep it in mind.

3. Most of the advisors present have not actually witnessed violent acts on their campus or with their students...at all. A refreshing fact.

4. The group unanimously agreed upon the crucial importance of staying engaged with students who are having difficulty and getting to know them. Also, we agreed it's important to stay in touch with your work team as a whole, so everyone knows what's happening with troubled students.

5. The group also agreed that that making students aware of counseling options and recommending them politely was a good choice. We also agreed that, in cases where violence wasn't an immediate concern but depression or withdrawal was, the campus' office of student life or the student's academic department should be notified, where possible within privacy laws.

6. An important part of the "post-violence" plan is to create a variety of open dialog opportunities to discuss events and their views allowing for the normalizing of fears and the establishing of rapport between students...

ALSO: During the Best Practices session, several advisers in the "employment group" discussed the issue of OPT for students completing certificate programs. One school reported two previous denials.

Certificate programs can qualify for OPT. In cases where there may be question about a student's eligibility, the DSO can include a brief cover letter which spells out the details and requirements of the program. Keep in mind the regulations related to OPT and cite them accordingly in your letter.

The I-20 should read "other: certificate" and not "Associate's" unless your school has determined that the certificate program is equivalent to an Associate's degree. This is an institutional decision.

Abe Schafermeyer, one of our Region's two Regulatory Ombuds, brought this issue to the attention of NAFSA's Policy and Practice Subcommittee several months ago. Given that this issue has not been a trend, it is quite possible that this was the result of one officer's misinterpretation of the regulations.

If your student receives a Request for Evidence (RFE) for a pending application, respond promptly with concrete information. If you have questions, contact Abe Schafermeyer (schafea@uoregon.edu).

Session B: Evaluating Evaluators and Evaluations

Presented by Sabrina Moss, Cascadia Community College and Wade Bird, Seattle University

Please refer to AWISA website (www.region1.nafsa.org/AWISA/AWISA_index.htm) for this session's .ppt presentation.

This session set out to "evaluate the evaluators", evaluators being transcript evaluation services and evaluated the pros and cons of outsourcing evaluations. The presenters urged AWISAns throughout to complete transcript evaluations on campus. "If you have to look *that* closely at the results of the credentials evaluations, why not look directly at the transcript itself?"

Presenters solicited services from several transcript evaluations company, explaining that their intent was to locate a new transcript evaluation company that their institution would consistently work with. The same transcript was sent out to all companies for evaluation.

Presenters stated that evaluators often do not present accurate or correct work. There were a lot of discrepancies and it was determined that one evaluator's degree came from a diploma mill. One

company missed an entire degree on its credentials evaluation. Only one company could offer credits by quarter OR semester. Many companies were very inflexible in this respect.

One example of a credentials evaluation company's error: in Korea, GPA is based on a 0-4.5 scale vs. the U.S. where the GPA system is on a 0-4.0 scale. This difference in grading scale was not taken into account in the credentials evaluation! At times, failing grades were dropped completely from transcript evaluations, resulting in completely inaccurate results!

Some companies gave credit for ESL courses even when this is not a generally accepted practice.

Conclusion: credentials evaluations companies produced 100% inaccuracies! Evaluations cost more than \$250 per transcript, sometimes take more than 6 months to be returned, and are often incorrect.

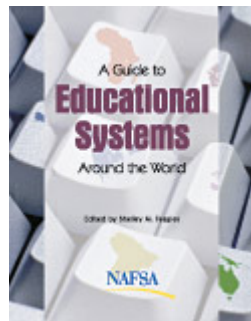
It is also known among international students which companies will give students the highest amount of credit and highest evaluation grades. Students then use these companies.

Cascadia Community College encourages students to get evaluations from certain companies. It is important for international students that their transcripts are evaluated correctly so that their transcripts and degrees will be accepted at future institutions! There have been cases when degrees have not been accepted due to incorrect or inappropriate transcript evaluations or transfer of credit. Schools were also forewarned: one case of bad credential evaluation can affect everything in the future (sets a poor precedent).

Recommended resources:

- NAFSA's *A Guide to Educational Systems Around the World*

Order information from NAFSA website:



Author(s):

Shelley Feagles

Publisher:

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

Item No.:

CD2055

Price:

\$ 19 (Members)

\$ 25 (Non-Members)

Now available again as a PDF document on CD, the book compiles information on the educational systems of more than 156 countries, from Albania to Zimbabwe, covering secondary as well as higher education. Articles on the new methodology of credential evaluation, interpreting foreign grades, and using the internet as a research tool provide critical background information for the novice or experienced admissions professional. 1999. 398 pp.

Click here to order: http://www.nafsa.org/publication.sec/working_with_international/a_guide_to_educational

- AACRAO's *Foreign Educational Credentials Required*

Order information from AACRAO website:

Foreign Educational Credentials Required

\$100 nonmember/\$75 member; 2003; Item # 9019

Looking for a concise and easily referenced source for information on credentials and other documentation that would be required for entry from a given country to a specified level of study? The fifth edition of *Foreign Educational Credentials Required* indicates, in a convenient and consistent form, the educational credentials which should be available for applicants from over 220 countries. Click here to order: <https://www.aacrao.org/forms/PublicationForm/>

- Presenters recommended these 2 books as the best resources for credentials evaluation. It was also strongly recommended that staff be trained in credentials evaluation. Having a staff member trained on credentials evaluation is an excellent resource and well worth the cost of attending a conference on the subject.

- The National Association of Credentials Evaluation Services (NACES - <http://www.naces.org/>) is not necessarily recommended. Members don't receive notable services beyond membership only.
- ACE network recommended – part of NAFSA

Concurrent Sessions: 10:45-12:15

Session C: F-1 Workshop for Beginners

Presented by Kelley Osmanbhoy, University of Washington

Basic regulatory and support/resource information was provided to advisers new to the field. Special attention was given to finding assistance and using resources, school responsibilities, and SEVIS reporting requirements. Attendees were given a resource guide as well as a quiz!

If you would like handouts from this session, please email Kelley Osmanbhoy at waltersk@u.washington.edu. She will mail you a copy.

Session D: FIUTS

Presented by Era Schrepfer, Executive Director of The Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS)

Please refer to the AWISA website for the complete .ppt presentation.

What is FIUTS? (from the FIUTS website: www.fiuts.org)

FIUTS (Foundation for International Understanding Through Students) is a community non-profit organization which was established on the [University of Washington](http://www.uw.edu) campus in 1948. At the intersection of the University of Washington and our community, FIUTS inspires lifelong engagement in experiences that build global understanding. FIUTS is a place to meet people from around the world or around the corner to establish links of friendship and communication.

- FIUTS provides a variety of services for international students, domestic students, and the community
- FIUTS provides a 14 day orientation session for new incoming international students, which includes day and evening programming and activities!
- Host a boat cruise with Rotary
- Generally host 2 activities per week
- Planning a spring break Olympic Peninsula trip
- FIUTS has 2 executive boards to which the Executive Director reports: 1 composed of students, 1 Board of Trustees who work with the community
- FIUTS provides extensive K-12 educational outreach
 - This works well if contacts are made with individual teachers
 - For example, FIUTS can arrange tours of UW conducted in French
 - Benefits of the K-12 work:
 - International students are curious about what U.S. elementary schools are like
 - Brings non-traditional role models (such as female engineers) into K-12 schools – providing students with inspirational examples to follow!
- FIUTS Classroom Ambassador Program:
 - Recently there has been extensive interest in Africa – Somalis
- One of the benefits of FIUTS is that they work with both international AND domestic students
- Chopstick or origami lessons are popular
- Pen pal program – pairs international students with 3rd-5th grade students
- FIUTS Cultural Fest
 - Kids are given passports and have to visit various international booths to have their passports stamped
 - Guests are taught how to write their names in Kanji.
- How can schools start K-12 outreach programs?
 - Start small – contact a teacher or nearby school
 - Aim for 1-2 programs per year.
- Upcoming Events:

- August – fundraising dinner in Tokyo
- FIUTS funding:
 - ¼ of funds are from personal donors
 - Funding also provided from foundations and grants
- FIUTS also works with Northwest Harvest, Seattle Works and the UW Carlson Center to engage international students in volunteer programs
- FIUTS publishes an e-newsletter and a monthly newsletters aimed at donors
- FIUTS has a pool of 80-100 students
- Most international student participation is recruited during the initial orientation when you have student's undivided attention
- Question: are there any organizations similar to FIUTS? Seems to be a very unique organization!
 - Yes – Metro International in NYC is similar to FIUTS, and provides similar activities, but are more religious based.

12:30-1:30 Lunch – enjoyed at the SSCC cafeteria, café, or nearby restaurants.

1:45-2:45 **Travel Issues Q & A session with Customs and Border Protection Officer Joseph Stead** (trainer for primary and secondary processes)

General travel tips—advise students to:

- Check visa for accuracy before leaving home country.
- Make sure documents are with them (not in luggage).
- Arrive within the required timeline: no earlier than 30 days before start date on document. However, CBP has some flexibility to allow entry up to 40 days before start date, and 45 days specifically at Sea-Tac.
- Don't open the sealed envelope from the U.S. consulate.
- Bring evidence of admission from school

Reasons a student might be sent to secondary inspection:

- Missing documents (CBP may issue I-515A or contact DSO/RO. Blue ink is only required on I-20s, not DS-2019s.)
- Missing information on the documents (May contact DSO/RO. On weekends, entry is at the discretion of the Port Director.)
- Reporting too late (May contact school. Would be great to have weekend contacts. Carry other academic information.)
- Reporting too early (Can use discretion. May admit with another visa, if possible. Different types of removal: "Withdrawal of application," most common, "Expedited Removal," which is negative and potentially bars admission for up to five years. The third type of removal involves a judge.)
- Status violation indication (May spend hours cross-referencing information. Please put remarks about terminations.)
- U.S. VISIT fingerprint issues (Could be due to officer error, moisture issues causing mismatch, fraud.)
- Altered documents
- Student doesn't look like photo (Experts available to check documents; CBP keeps on hand documents from around the world.)
- No proof of having paid the SEVIS fee (especially for Canadians)
- Passport not valid for at least six months beyond entry date and applicant not part of the "6-month Club" (CBP discretion)

Answers to questions submitted in advance.

1. I have noticed a lag time between the date a student enters, and when we see the POE alert in SEVIS. Sometimes it is entered immediately, other times there is a wait of one week or more (has happened in previous quarters). Could you explain a bit how that works when an F1 enters the US? I had assumed that the entry date / time was entered at the moment the student was admitted to the country, but apparently that is not the case. Thanks!

Answer: The officer who admits the student must enter certain information into the computer. If he/she does not enter the information then SEVIS is not alerted of their presence. The I-94 is sent to the Service Center and after it is properly imputed their arrival time will appear in SEVIS.

2. Over the past year or so, we have seen more students admitted late (after the reporting date) for school. This has mostly been okay, other times it has been problematic. We were under the impression that students could be turned away. What is the philosophy border folks are operating on, and what procedures do they normally follow when a student is arriving, say, 1 week or more after the reporting date on the I-20 form, given that there are no special directions for late entry on the I-20 form? Thanks

Answer: At Sea-Tac we contact the DSO and confirm that the student is in fact enrolled and will be allowed to continue with enrollment. On weekends the officer should issue an I-515 if they believe the student. If not, they could be removed from the U.S. Case by case basis.

3. A new student enters the US with his/her initial attendance I-20. S/he gets an entry stamp only on passport (NOT on I-94 nor on I-20).

Note: Officer error. They should contact the local Deferred inspections office. Make an appointment to have an erroneous correction completed on the I-94.

a. Do we need to send the student's original I-20 and original I-94 card together with copies of student's passport photo page, visa page, and the page that has the entry stamp to CBP office in Sea-Tac Airport to get stamp on I-20 and I-94?

Answer: No—Deferred Inspections office. The student should make sure that the officer stamped the I-94 before they leave the Federal Inspections area.

b. If so, please provide us the mailing address?

7077 Perimeter Road #116
Seattle, WA, 98108
Phone: 206.553.0667

c. What type of mail does the CBP office recommend school/student to send documents to them, (e.g. DHL/express mail or registered mail, etc.)?

Answer: I would recommend registered mail. It will be received faster and is cheaper. For a little bit more money the student can have a return receipt sent back to them. If not, they can check online to verify the recipient received the document. CBP always uses Federal Express for all of our shipments.

4. Could we have contact information (eg. phone, fax, email address) for a particular officer at CBP, so that we can contact them seeking their advice if the needs arise? Or should we just call the general CBP office number?

I would recommend contacting an officer at any Port of Entry in the local area. They are better equipped and have better knowledge with your local area/issues. If you have problems or need to contact our office in the Seattle area, then contact CBPO Stead or Wamsley 206.553.0466. At Boeing field you can contact CBPO Ikeda, 206.553.0667.

5. Are the designated ports of departure for Special Registrants listed on the CBP site? The only place I can find them on the ICE site is in the Walkaway materials, and this list has not been updated since December, 2003. As far as I know, the most recent update was August 2006 in the Federal Register; the updated list is on the NAFSA site, but I cannot find it elsewhere.

Yes—walkaway material is found on the CBP website at www.cbp.gov. At the top of the page there is a search block. If you type in the word "NSEERS" all caps and hit enter, you will have to scroll to the bottom of the page and you will see "SPECIAL REGISTRATION PROCEDURES."

http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/travel/id_visa/visitors_us/nseers_ports.ctt/nseers_ports.doc

6. If a student gets married and changes her name, and has the change notated in both her passport and I-20, must she also change her visa? Or can she re-enter with the valid visa issued to her maiden name and supporting documentation to show the change?

Answer: If anyone, male or female, gets married and changes their names, don't worry about it. Have the student go to their consulate and get an annotation on their passport that indicates the name change. Some may not be able to get the annotation done because of several reasons (no consulate in the area, not enough time, etc.). If they cannot get it before departing the U.S., then just have them carry proof of their marriage. If they do not have that, then don't worry about it. If they have a valid passport, visa and I-20 they will be able to get into the U.S. The school should not indicate a different name until they bring in proof of marriage.

7. If a student has violated his student status and travels to Canada with a new I-20/new SEVIS number in order to make a new entry and re-gain valid F-1 status, should he receive a new I-94 card? One of our students recently drove up to Canada and made a re-entry, but was told to keep his previous I-94 card; usually students in these situations receive new I-94 cards. Was this accurate?

Answer: If a student violated his or her status they will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. They must prove they are admissible into the U.S. As per the Immigration and Naturalization Act it clearly states: Every alien is an immigrant until they can prove to the officer that they fall into one of the nonimmigrant classifications. The student must apply for reinstatement instead of getting a new I-20.

If a student violates his/her status one of the following could occur:

1. Found admissible and admitted
2. Deferred inspection
3. Allowed to withdraw their application and paroled into the U.S.
4. Allowed to withdraw their application and return home on the next available flight.
5. Formally removed from the U.S. with a possible Barr from re-entering for a set amount of time.

If a student goes to Canada, returns to the U.S. and is found to be in good standing, they are absent for less than 30 days, in possession of their original I-94, I-20 and passport, the officer should revalidate the visa even if it is expired. If the student has new documents the officer may have them complete a new I-94.

8. What are some of the indications that cause an officer to send an international student or scholar for secondary inspection?

Answer: See initial discussion of possible reasons that students are sent to secondary inspection.

9. What are these documents an officer is routinely looking for when inspecting an F-1 student besides valid I-20, valid passport, valid F-1 visa and valid financial verification? We have been recommending new students bring official school acceptance letter, continuing students bring enrollment verification and transcript.

Answer: As per the INA, upon entry the student must show the officer a passport, I-20 and I-94. It is always good for the student to bring as much information from the school to prove their admissibility to the officer. Remember it is up to the alien to prove they are admissible into the US. If there is any question of their admissibility the student will have documents on them to show the officer.

10. What are the situations or circumstances that trigger an officer to call an International Student and Scholar Office for clarification purpose or any other purpose?

1. Verify a student is in good standing and attending school
2. Missing I-20
3. Documentation error
4. Why a student fell below full course of study
5. How many times a student fell below a full course of study
6. Find out when a student departed their school

7. Find out when a student reported to school

These are just a few reasons an officer would call the school.

11. What are the situations or circumstances that trigger an officer to send an international student or scholar back to their home country?

Answer: It could be for any reason I just talked about.

Hani Hanjour, the Saudi pilot who flew American Airlines flight 77 into the Pentagon “had lived in the US off and on throughout the 1990s, mostly in Arizona, intermittently taking flying lessons at several different flying schools. He was, in the view of one of his flight instructors, ‘intelligent, friendly, and very courteous, very formal, a nice enough fellow but a terrible pilot.’ He finally got a commercial license from the FAA. As for Ziad Jarrah, the pilot of the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania, he was ‘the handsome middle child and only son of an industrious, middle-class family in Beirut,’ who was considered ‘easygoing.’

There are reasons I cannot tell you why students are sent back to their home country. Officers with Customs and Border Protection have sworn to protect the borders of the U.S.

12. Do you have access to SEVIS at the airport inspection stand? Do you enter an F or J's entry information right there if you have access to it?

Answer: We are able to view SEVIS. We are not able to make any changes to it. We do put information in our computer, which should show SEVIS the student arrived.

13. On SEVIS Form I-20 for travel endorsement, the language reads as valid for one year. But some institutions sign it every six months. What is your stand on this? Would you consider the travel endorsement to be valid for one year or six months from the signing date? How about the travel signature for J-1 EV?

It is mandatory for all F-1 and J-1 students to have their I-20 [and DS-2019] updated every year. M-1s must be updated every 6 months. I personally recommend all students have their DSOs/ROs sign the I-20 if it has not been signed in the last 8 months and are departing the country.

14. I have encountered cases where a student was sent to secondary inspection on multiple occasions and was told by the officer that “something was strange with the record; check with your school.” However, when we access the record, it looks fine—active, not expired, etc. When this happens, it seems to be with students who were transfers or have had terminated records, even if I included remarks about the termination. In these cases, would it be appropriate to refer the student to the new DHS TRIP program?

Answer: No

Or might they have a record that will simply always cause delays?

Answer: Yes. If the student has ever had a terminated SEVIS record CBP could be checked every time the student enters the U.S.

Additional questions:

Q. A student was issued an I-20, and then delayed admission. The start date in SEVIS was deferred, and a new I-20 was mailed. Upon arrival, CBP stamped the earlier I-20. Is this a problem?

A. Don't worry about it. Just be sure student always carries new one as well.

Q. Long story: a student has two I-94 cards, stamped for B-2 and F-1 status. What to do?

A. Student should write the date of his/her previous U.S. exit on the back of the B-2 I-94 card, and submit both the next time he/she leaves the U.S. so the exits can be recorded.

Q. What should a student do if he/she lost the I-94 card?

A. Make sure to stop at a U.S. VISIT kiosk before leaving the U.S.

Q. How does CBP get the contact information for DSOs?

A. SEVIS and/or searching the web.

Q. For students who are under 18 years old, and forget to have their parents sign the I-20, is a signed fax acceptable?

A. Yes.

2:45-3:15 **Advisor to Advisor – led by Kelley Osmanbhoy**

1. Current RegBuds are Abe Shafermeyer – NSC liaison and Peggy Setoguchi- general questions and conference planning. RegBuds are volunteers who serve for two years on a NAFSA national subcommittee and the Regional team.

Immediate Case Intervention:

RegBud Contact: Abe Schafermeyer

Assistant Director
Office of International Programs
University of Oregon
Eugene OR 97403-5209

Phone: 541-346-1215

Fax: 541-346-1232

E-mail: schafea@uoregon.edu

Contact Preference: E-mail. He will contact you back via phone as needed.

Note: Cases will be sent in batch on Tuesdays to NSC. Please use IssueNet to document your case information.

General Immigration/Advising Questions/Conference Planning:

(Back up for Immediate Case Intervention when Abe is out)

RegBud Contact: Peggy Setoguchi

Career Specialist, International Programs
Lake Washington Technical College
Kirkland, WA 98034

Phone: 425-739-8160

Fax: 425-739-8145

E-mail: peggy.setoguchi@lwtc.edu

Contact Preference: E-mail. She will coordinate a time to phone you and discuss the case/situation in person. Please provide as many details as possible in the e-mail for correct response. Will try to call back by no later than Friday of each week.

2. AWISAns encouraged to continue to use IssueNet - issuenet.nafsa.org
IssueNet – OPT date changes and cancellations, still submit.
Look for RegBuds in the NAFSA Commons at the National Conference
3. What's new?
 - a. I-539s for COS and reinstatement are now going to the California Service Center- no more District Office – effective April 2!
 - b. Change in the issuance of RFEs to take affect June 18
 - i. 72 Fed.Reg. 19100 (April 17, 2007). Effective June 18, 2007, USCIS will no longer be bound to grant 12 weeks of response time to applicants and petitioners who receive Requests for Evidence (RFEs). The rule gives USCIS authority to deny applications or petitions "if all required initial evidence is not submitted with the application or petition or does not demonstrate eligibility," or to issue an RFE requesting that the additional evidence be submitted "within a specified period of time as determined by USCIS." The rule also codifies the long-standing policy that "An applicant or petitioner must establish that he or she is eligible for the requested benefit at the time of filing the application or petition."
 - c. NAFSA AM going on-line this year!

- d. Contacting the State Department (old news revisited)
 - i. NAFSA/DOS visa office liaison call, 11.15.06
 - ii. Can call DOS message line, 202.663.1851, to check on pending SAOs (security advisory opinions)
 - iii. Next, can contact the consulate directly by email or fax, depending on the instructions on the consulate's website
 - iv. Still no success, email or call the public inquiries office at 202.663.1225 or usvisa@state.gov
 - v. Trend or misapplication of the law, file a report with IssueNet
 - vi. Can also contact the RegBud through IssueNet, who can be in touch with the NAFSA-DOS liaison

- 4. FERPA, ICE visits, the regulations
 - a. 8 CFR 214.3(g)(1): Immigration can request any or all of the data specified in this section on any student or group of students.
 - b. International students are covered by FERPA, but there are exceptions. See AM 13.2
 - c. Regulations require a school to respond to DHS request for info within 3 business days. The school has 10 days to respond to requests regarding a group of students.
 - d. Letter to AACRAO re: SEVIS and Disclosures to DHS/ICE, <http://www.ed.gov/print/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/library/aacrao.html>

3:15- 3:45

Business Meeting

Elections speeches:

Mark Howard, Treasurer (2 year term)

Chanya Allen, Secretary / Chair Elect (1 year as Secretary, next as Chair Elect)

Approval of Minutes granted

Membership Roster passed around for updates.

Best of AWISA: Awarded to Kelley Osmanbhoy for her "F-1 Workshop for Beginners" session

Please note that the **Fall AWISA Meeting date has been changed to Friday, November 2nd.**

07-08 AWISA Meeting Dates:

Fall: Friday, November 2

Winter: Friday, January 25

Spring: Friday, April 25

Announcements:

Position Openings:

** Administrative Assistant position open at Pacific Lutheran University. Part time assistant in Dean's office and part time in International Programs. Refer to the www.plu.edu for more information

** Position Opening at Annie Wright School - Director of Admissions and resident advisor positions open. Posted at www.aw.org.

4:00 Tour of SSCC Arboretum/Chinese Garden – Cancelled due to poor weather.

Thank you for attending the Spring AWISA Meeting! Have a great summer!